

National Catholic Theater Conference

PRODUCTION CALENDAR

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Dear Members:

Our formulated plans for a national convention were in the mails when the WPB ruling prohibiting large group meetings was announced. This came as no small disappointment; four years had elapsed since our last national conference, and this year's meeting seemed imperative to the welfare of our organization.

Among other matters the agenda for this year's meeting included the following:

- a. Election of Officers and Executive Board.
- b. Revision of our constitution to meet present needs.
- c. Securing of hierarchal approbation.
- d. Formulation of plans for establishment and operation of diocesan units.
- e. Preparation of a Catholic play list.
- f. Demonstration of techniques employed by leading dramatic groups, members of the Conference.
- g. Discussion of unsolved production problems.
- h. Discussion of ways and means to give greater service to our members.
- i. Presentation of top speakers from the theater world.

As soon as the WPB ruling was made clear, I asked the members of the Executive Board to let me know their pleasure in disposing of this matter. The majority favored calling off the large convention as a patriotic duty. The Board felt, however, that a business meeting was necessary. This we could have within the restrictions of the WPB ruling.

For the above reasons I am calling a business meeting of the National Catholic Theater Conference to be held at Chicago on June 9, 1945. The exact time and place will be announced in the May Production Calendar. This meeting shall include:

- a. Officers and Members of the Executive Board.
- b. Chairmen of the Special Committees and Members thereof.
- c. One representative with power to vote from each of 34 group members (Reservations for group representatives will be accepted in the order of receipt; we urge in particular the reservations of delegates from groups not already represented in a or b). The Conference will be open, of course, to all members living in Chicago or who are there on other business and have not used transportation facilities or hotel accommodations because of the meeting. The number called to this meeting will be less than 50 and hence it comes under no WPB ruling.

Thus we shall be able to transact the greater portion of the business originally set up for our larger convention. The only thing we shall lack will be the inspiration we get from meeting the members of our National Catholic Theater Conference en masse. The problem has been a difficult one. I can assure you that it has been the desire of every member of the Executive Board to proceed in whatever manner the best interests of the members can be served.

Sincerely yours,

Charles S. Costello
Chairman

COMMUNITY THEATER

(The Catholic Theater of Detroit has evolved in five years a working plan which points to better and better theater. We asked Margaret Passmore, Secretary, to describe the mechanism. Every word of her response was important and we regret this telescoping. Start with the understanding that CTD is a vital force in the community; its members are enthusiastic; the democratic principle of shared responsibility is basic. Miss Passmore offers to answer any inquiries you may have.)

Paul Lilly founded The Catholic Theater of Detroit in March 1940 with the approval of His Excellency, Archbishop Mooney. Rev. Emmett Hannick, appointed Moderator by His Excellency, serves in a spiritual and advisory capacity. The administration is left strictly to an elective Board of Directors consisting of 13 officers and representatives of membership at large and subscription members. The President annually appoints 15 Committee Chairmen and Department Heads ranging from membership to make-up. Each of these in turn appoints his staff.

For each major production a different Director and Production Manager are selected by the Board of Directors; the PM in turn chooses Committee Chairmen of costumes, props, script girl, call girl and house manager, and calls upon various departments for assistance from their trained personnel (e.g.: Technical Department supplies sets, lights, sound effects and stage manager, etc.). These Chairmen appoint their own committee members. And all, including the Director, are under the supervision of the Production Manager. Thus many become a working part of the group, each does an efficient job at his own particular task, no one is overburdened. The Children's Stage follows the same procedure.

Throughout this operation is a definite training program: Directors and Production Managers choose assistants in each instance who are to be trained by actual experience to become Directors and Production Managers. Heads of Departments and Committee Chairmen are selected from ranks of those who have previously worked in those departments. Untrained members are appointed with a mixture of trained members to the committees, thus new members are trained and at a future time may move up to chairman a committee.

All this work is on a volunteer basis - no one is paid but the Business Manager and the Office Secretary who work as full-time employees carrying out the day by day business of the theater, acting as a central clearing agency, providing advice and help to other community groups, lending scripts and scenery, sending out directors, etc. In addition to its business office, CTD maintains studios for rehearsals, meetings and classes, and a scene shop for construction and storage of scenery, etc.

Our group is strictly self-supporting, receives no subsidy from the Archdiocese or from any agency. Funds are received from subscription memberships (\$5), members' dues (\$5), and sale of Season Books (\$4.50). We have 100 active members, 180 probationers, and 83 in Service, together with a Children's Stage membership of 200 (dues \$1). New members are on a year's probation. The Membership Committee makes clear in the first interview that we approach our theater duties seriously, that our operation is business-like and professional. Our productions are viewed by critics, are staged in a Union house with budgets of \$1300 to \$1500. With this investment members cannot be careless in their duties.

Every opportunity is provided through instruction classes as well as rotation of committee work to know all aspects of theater. Weekly classes, taught by volunteers are open to members without charge. Casting, which in the hands of a director, can sound the death knell of a dramatic group, is decided on an impartial competitive basis by a committee consisting of Director, Production Manager, representative of class instructors and delegate from membership, the two latter serving all year. Our annual awards of scholarships and dramatic libraries, providing further incentive to our members, have been discussed in previous Calendars (cf Midsummer 1944, ed).

To Detroit a CTD production has come to mean a high standard of sound and entertaining theater. To our members the group offers a real opportunity to contribute to others and to develop illimitably their own artistic and administrative abilities. Ideals are paying big dividends in Detroit.

CROSS-COUNTRY CIRCUIT - APRIL

Baltimore - Loyola College Playshop supplants its usual evening of one-acts by "Career Angel."

Davenport - At Immaculate Conception Academy the Cameo Players offer "Career Angel" on April 13 and 15.

Dayton - Blackfriars present "Adam and Eve" April 14 and 15.

Montreal - Loyola College will introduce "Savonarola" to Montreal audiences April 19 -- 21.

New York - Carroll Club plays host to metropolitan college representatives for Annual Dramatic Debate April 12.

Pittsburgh - Sister Rose de Lima's drama group at Sacred Heart High School will present "Career Angel" April 10 and 11.

St. John, N.B. - The CYO of the Diocese of St. John offers its most ambitious undertaking to date - "The Song of Bernadette." CYO units are also busy preparing for their Spring Drama Tournament.

Tarrytown - Marymount College Dramatic Club has chosen "The Rivals" for its major spring production April 22.

Washington - at Catholic University's Theater, "Peer Gynt" April 3 through 16.

Wichita - April 20--22 Diocesan Catholic Theater Festival. April 30, "Career Angel" at Mt. Carmel Academy.

Wichita's Fourth Annual Diocesan Catholic Theater Festival will be opened on Friday Evening, April 20, when Monsignor Leon McNeill, President of Sacred Heart Junior College, will welcome guests.

Several productions are scheduled for the weekend: "King Nutcracker," based on The Nutcracker Suite will be staged by Fine Arts Department of Sacred Heart Jr. College and St. John's Academy; Mt. Carmel Academy will offer a choric drama, Cathedral High a modern short play. Sister Agnes Virginia of St. Mary's academy, Leavenworth, will direct a technical demonstration of home-made lighting. Mr. Charles Costello will lead round table discussions, and Mr. J. J. Walsh, S.J., of St. Mary's, Dr. Campton Bell, head of the School of the Theater, Denver, and Sister Marie Anthony, author of "Marionettes Teach Them," will also contribute to the program. Mrs. L. G. Bujarski, NCTC Regional Chairman, anticipates an enthusiastic meeting within WPB regulations.

PEAK OF THE SEASON

Busy NCTC member-directors are Theresa Marie Cuny and G. Marston Haddock. Miss Cuny is directing three Senior Plays, "Career Angel," "Murder in a Nunnery," and "Here She Comes" plus an operetta, "Royal Holiday," which has a cast and chorus of 75, and an entry in U of Ill. Drama Festival, not to mention the radio program she manages.

Three of the nine academies which Mr. Haddock covers on his weekly rounds have close production dates: On May 3, Oak Knoll School of the Holy Child at Summit produces "The Only Way;" May 4 and 5 the Academy of the Holy Child, Sharon Hill, presents "The Song of Bernadette;" May 13 is performance date for "Beau Brummel" at School of the Holy Child, Suffern.

The Children's Theater at College of St. Francis is rehearsing "Honey Pirates" for an early June performance.

According to Rev. K. G. Schroeder, "Traitors' Gate" was Loras Players' triumph of the season. Demand for repeat performances may mean extra bookings of next season's productions. Watch Players Magazine, May issue, for an article on the Players by Father Schroeder.

Emmet Lavery in the East on a sorrowful mission - his Mother's serious illness and death - found time to encourage us at headquarters with a report of the Jongleurs' (Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles) stimulating plans for a combined music, dance and drama presentation of woman's part in the turn from war to peace. Warsaw, a Pacific Island, and Immaculate Heart's Campus provide three of the scenes, but we'll save the real story for our Jongleur reporter in May's issue.

Jean Silvain, Mr. Lavery's translator discovered alive and well on the reoccupation of Paris, is already at work on a French translation of "Murder in a Nunnery." And "First Legion" has been added to repertory of Comedie Francaise. Paris saw 250 performances at the Vieux Coublier in 1938-39.

A full schedule for Sister Charitas at Academy of Holy Angels includes: "Come Rain or Shine" for Seniors, "Career Angel" for Juniors; "Too Many Stars" for Sophomores; "Hi Jinks at Hollister" for Freshmen, with "Summons of Saniel" and "Sacrifice in Brocade" as extras.

SEARCH FOR A PLAY

Resident Theater Production Company of Kansas City, Mo., in cooperation with Dramatists Play Service, promises \$1000 and a Broadway production to the prize-winning play in its contest opened Mar. 15. Full length plays (no musicals) to be typed, in English, may be submitted up to November 15, 1945.

"Snafu," the comedy of the under-age soldier has just been released for non-professionals in most territory west of the Mississippi, throughout the south-eastern states to and including Kentucky and Virginia, and limited territory in the northeast. Also throughout Canada. One set, 10 men, 7 women. Books promised April 1. Royalty \$50 for first, \$25 for each repeat performance.

"The Hasty Heart," "A Bell for Adano" and "Over 21" also released by Dramatists Play Service in some sections. The last two in 75¢ books; Hasty Heart is available only in ms.

Father Falicki of St. Joseph's Seminary, Grand Rapids, has already selected next fall's first production - "Through the Eye of a Needle."

Father Pfeiffer's adaptation of "The Mass of Brother Michel" (the script is called "Whom the Lord Loveth") was produced with elaborate care of Xavier's Dramatic Guild last month. Costumes, sets and curtains were a feast for the eyes. The adaptation, made with the publisher's consent, is now in Michael Kent's hands and will not be immediately available for production elsewhere.

An interested and enthusiastic member of Catholic University's first night audience for "Tidings Brought to Mary" was Paul Claudel's son.

Three former members of Catholic Theater of Detroit had prominent roles in Passaic's Passion Play, "Her Mother's Promise." The author of the play based on the story of the Good Thief has offered NCTC production rights to the play outside of New Jersey and New York. A copy of the script, with revisions made following this season's performances will be available shortly.

Rev. J. R. Hanlon of Chester vouches for the success of "Bernadette." Largest audience in seven years was deeply impressed. Repeat performance for mid-Apr.

MONTREAL'S FESTIVAL

The Cathespian Guild of Montreal has invited Mrs. Wyatt, our Vice President, to act as Adjudicator of its Catholic Drama Festival May 2, 3 and 4 at Loyola College. The tournament is an annual feature of Montreal's season. This year's program includes two original plays, one the winner of their 1944 play-writing contest.

TEEN-AGE CANTEEN

Attendance at Catholic Theater Guild Teen-Age Canteen, Richmond, has been averaging 145 on Friday evenings. Many of the new recruits participated in the Guild's Passion Play, "Return from Calvary," produced March 18 and 25 in two of Richmond's public high schools. The teen-agers are showing their appreciation of a share in the Guild by attending extra morning Masses and distributing pamphlets.

AT IMMACULATA

Cue and Curtain Players of Immaculata College will entertain former members at a Silver Anniversary Reunion this month. Questionnaires from former students are being filed for future guidance of Speech majors and minors. During the past month Sophomore Players interpreted an original Passion Play, "The Light of His Countenance" by Sister Mary Donatus, while others premiered a St. Patrick's Day extravaganza.

FIRST LINE SUBSTITUTION

We regret the absence of the Play Analysis sheet in this issue. It seemed time your library index was brought up to date. The list begun this month will be completed with May's issue.

Perforce we have eliminated information other than the bare listing of title, author and publisher. It will at least inform you what is available for careful inspection. Remember, not all plays listed are recommended.

For lending library regulations, please refer to Production Calendar of December 1944; if you are a new NCTC member and have not received a copy of these rules, please write to us.

